POETRY QUARTERLY

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Typography by Seán Jennett

EDITORIAL

Anybody who edits a magazine of contemporary verse over a longish period of time cannot help feeling that he is looking at the sky towards the rim of a far horizon and watching the prevailing winds beating up the clouds and the clear weather, the change and the thunder as the currents of literature, the expression of the inner scene passing in the minds of the living literary artists of the day veer and blow hot and cold with the times. Poetry is, perhaps, the most sensitive indicator of what is happening in the mind, conscious and unconscious, of contemporary man. There is a deep reason for the subtle changing accent of taste and technique, form and imagery varying from age to age, from generation to generation, from year to year. It is evident to one who listens carefully to the very recent work of living poets that a note is apparent of greater simplicity and clarity, spareness and the dignity of man alone with the calamity of his broken world. It is not so much in the books of the better known practitioners that this is so visible because they have their personal style so marked by the strength of their individuality that they follow laws of their own. It is always easy to say this is a poem by Auden or Dylan Thomas, or Nicholas Moore or Alex Comfort. They develop their technical tricks and mannerisms in a world of their own and vary very much less than the lesser known poet. It seems more and more evident that verse heavily burdened with a wealth of obscure imagery and difficult, sometimes private allusion and association, belongs to the past. During the war years this apocalyptic imagery of suffering and disaster reflected itself in the poetry of the time. Now it would seem that the feeling of the public points towards the more simple utterance. Naturally the heavily wrought, the obscure and the difficult kind of verse will continue to be written. It is merely intended to give some indication of the actual and probable tendency of public appreciation of contemporary verse. Writers are not much affected by it. They pursue their lonely furrow with proud determination necessary to their existence and survival. But the publisher and the editor is often much more in touch with change in public taste and the direction of the general current. These remarks are only meant to indicate something of

the direction of probable future trends in post-war literature. They are tentative and of interest merely to the common reader of verse.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to say that standards have been lowered during the war years and must inevitably rise if only that magazine the speaker is interested in could be got going. We think this is very largely bunk. The poetic output of the last five years has never been critically valued or competently anthologized in one book. When this can be done it will be seen how any return to the flippancy, spiritual bankruptcy and slick vulgarity of 1939 would be as disastrous in the literary as in the economic or political field. It is very likely that we are going to live in a world largely bedevilled by business men in the shadow of fear cast by the encroaching flood of police states governed by thugs and their following of spies and toadies. It would be a good thing to remember that geography is a subject invented by rather foolish old men, that the Atlantic is only a little water, and that the world of the American States and Western Europe has a common literature and way of life. It is never realized by the hide-bound politician and the dry spider infesting the ministries and departments of state how much the little magazines can do to draw together the peoples who live in this community of thought and feeling. The message of encouragement they have for each other is going to be austere, dignified, simple and incorruptibly devoted to the truth as long as they can use the language of the free individual.

The music and poetry meetings at the Ethical Church Hall, Bayswater, which were so successful in spite of black-out and bombing, are being resumed at the end of September. Poets desiring to read their own work and all who would like to receive details of times and programmes, should apply to Alec Craig, 59, Oakwood Road, Bricket Wood, Herts.

ALEX COMFORT

Song for the Women of All Countries

O world of snow and fires burning
country of night and moving lamps
o night of brothers and of enemies

I have seen you and you will come again
your hands full of the bright stars of revenge
for so many lovers sold into solitude

o small lights creeping in the city's grate
Helen of Sorrows is among the fires
she whose lover is dead at the wars

she whose lover is dead at the wars
for every empty womb, for two hands parted
revenge flies upward like sparks to the stars

for her the fire will fall again like snow
like white birds spinning in a wind of light
for her the fires will marry the wind, the streets

sparkle with running feet and the streams of fire
she whose lover is dead at the wars:
for her the clouds in the white sky become

lovers like rivers joining silently
their fingers in the fields where every girl
holds in her hands the quiet songs of time

and blazing roofs and running feet will follow
her like bright brothers to avenge her loss
the tall fires will run behind her once again

the rage of women against these Judases . . .
o those pale brides will follow her and wash
their bright hair in the fallow of her tears!

MICHAEL RIVIERE

Mondelle

A Man more absolute
(One even a good hater)
Would not feel the fester in your beauty
The incisors behind your kiss.

I can't simplify
The globe to mere hemispheres
Of white and black: no, I'm
Not your champion, darling.

Yet envy the security
Of your love, envy your lover
Togged in conviction, insouciance:
He shall inherit the earth,

Favour the broad road
Irrespective of destination,
Undevious as juggernaut,
Impatient of the weakling spirit—

In his parish church note still
The tide-marks of christening
Marriage and burial,
The way there plain no longer.

O to see without question youth
In a dumb-bell, justice in scarlet,
In a column of newsprint, truth,
In a furtive brothel, Troy,

To measure by fashion and pence,
To swallow the public pronouncement
Unchewed and rise belching 'sense'
While griped with high-falutin poppycock . . .

The mountains cloud with rain,
Unfocussed potentialities—
Who knows what I shall attain?
While there's death there's hope:

And alive, odd lines to be sung—
Of a child strayed out of sunshine
To play in stone halls among the
Wise men who had seen Medusa.

New Year in the Cells, 1945

Europe gyved in ice,
Trussed in blood and hunger:

Her abundant warmth and joy
Wastes out of wounds into the snow:

The widow was lucky in the raid
If one child survived:

The corpse is lucky in the snow
If he spilt a full guts there:

The ship is lucky at sea
If all drowned soon.

God curse the cold
That froze the bell-tongue:

The war and hunger
That flayed the ringer:

Curse all black blood
This starry night.

GEORG TRAKL

The Spring of the Soul

An outcry in sleep; through dark corridors goes the wind,
And above the knotted boughs there breaks the azure
Of spring; there, in the purple dew the stars fade.
Green shines the river, and silver the towers
And avenues of the town. And oh the gentle ecstasy
Of the sliding boat and the dark cries of blackbirds
In the gardens of childhood; as the landscape lightens to rose.

Solemnly the waves murmur. Oh the humid shadows of the fields
And the pacing beasts; branches exploding with green
Nodding their crystal brows; my boat pulsing with light.
Gently the sun sings in the crimson clouds of the hill.
The wood of pine is still, earnest shadows on the stream.
Purity! oh Purity! Where are the dreaded paths of death,
Of grey and stony silence, the rocks of night
And the restless shadows? The foaming caverns of light?
Sister, I found you at brightest noon in the glade
Of the lonely wood when the cattle were mute and still;
White beneath the angry oak, the silver blossom of the thorn;
In your heart a fatality of death and a singing flame.

The waves play more darkly around the agile fish,
In this hour of sorrow and muted glance of light.
And the soul is strange upon earth. A ghostly blueness
Shimmers over the hewn-down wood, and a mournful bell
Tolls a long funeral note over the distant village.
The myrtle lies motionless on the white eyelids of the dead.
Through the failing noon runs the lapping sound of waves;
Shadows gather deeper in the shrubberies on the shore, a crimson
joy in the wind,
On the evening hill a song of humanity in the brother's heart.

(Translated by Walford Morgan)

FRED MARNAU

Two Poems

FOR ERNST

I

At eight, like a red hailstorm, in the evening
the foxes are leaping in the elder-bush
in the gardens of our dead neighbours.
Bewildered the June day tries the black glove
of darkness, and the scent of garments
moulders like worm-eaten greens, and the red youths
bluster in furs of hell under the grass.

Blessed be the courage in us, the crazy ones!
I look on the apples of this year:
about them the evening has never thus blossomed.
Before the century passes the moon will have
gathered in all of us, from the trees the apples
and also the foxy brains in our
skulls. Blessed be the courage. There should
have been no need to talk of God so much and O
freedom was not the first-born of the earth,
it was her late and last-born child.

II

When I am all in pieces—I am now unfit
For any Ladies bed; take the rest with you.
The tall mirrors do not lie, life has wavered
in ankle and heel, in the eyes revels the world.
Weather and duel it was, not crude iron poles,
which before the century turns at midday
broke the heart of our dearest lord.

His mind
was like a final ornament and shining round his head,
a bronze wreath of courage, ancient as death.
The wind has never encountered rougher branches
of heavy constancy, rocking, living onward,
through which from year to year it blows its folly.
O see of pride and mourning the autumnal antlers
whilst sinew, heart and core are all in pieces.

Take the rest with you.

(Translated by Ernst Sigler)

JOHN HEATH-STUBBS

Two Voyages

I

J'ai plus de souvenirs que si j'avais mille ans.—Baudelaire

How long I cannot say
I have lain drowned and sleepless on this sea,
Whose waters were my mother's bitter tears.
My beard, sargasso weed,
Cumbers your hopeful keel, my hand delays
Your freight of Indian moons, which hastens on-
And now comes in my fear—
To the same wished-for maelstrom of despair.

Wrapped in his cone of darkness each proceeds;
And I demand, too late,
The gift of your scared eyes, with which you light
Your blackened prow and this our ambient night;
For you will soon forget
That moment on the storm-rocked mast when hailed
Dead man his fellow, under scrutiny
Of gull-voiced, cold-eyed stars which ruled our birth.
Your body is the chart,
And you discern a mirrored mirage there—
Islands of dancing palm-trees, gaudy birds,
Small brown and naked children in the surf,
And on the off-shore wind
A breath of cinnamon and cloves—illusions
That I have suffered in these seas before

Lost voyager, o my dear,
Believe, were He our friend, yours should not be
The sterile beauty of a coral tree;
If you, through grace, achieve,
Locked in those boughs, a statue's ecstasy,
Or musically drown,
Or if my fear, even as this love, is vain—
Beached on whatever shore, remember me.

II

Full season now to turn
From the gardens suddenly tender under the sun
Which rises there for others
Breeding a precious dew where tears had hung,
Whose bright flower-faces smile to my averted eyes
With what unmerited kindness of farewell.
Take oar, hoist sail, and go
Once more to seas where only a dark star guides
And that long wavering lonely track of foam.
I know behind your eyes
Lie infinite distances of whispering wave
Under the arching caverns of the skull,
Where grope, voraciously,
Dark fishes hung about with living fire;
So, unregarded, move
Into the deeper waters, and there drown.

HARDIMAN SCOTT

Now, as I Remember . . .

Now, as I remember, the memory
Is like a pungent odour, like the tang
Of salt driven in over the marshes
And the sea-pine smell of samphire that spreads
Through the air . . . and it was peace then, in those
Half-formed days when I pushed through the bracken
Of Norfolk woods, the fronds curling round like
Lovers' fingers, caressive, detaining;
But there were no lovers then, and only
The needly path resiliently urged
Me towards the sea and the far mist-hung
Horizons.

And all the mornings were clear
And high-strung and tense as a nervous child,
The air pierced through with pine and brine-pricked. High

Overhead, feather-stitching the sky, geese
Moved their formations inland; a curlew
Wailed his perpetual mourning, and snipe
By some hidden bowstring released from the
Bristling clump of dirk-like reeds, shot out like
Arrows. And these movements in peace never
Could be construed as prophecy, patterns
In the paradox of war, not as I
Remember them.

Where the sea holly with
Linoleum leaves ridged greenly ragged
The sand dunes, like stubble the sea had left
Unshaven, there I walked and watched the waves
Springing up their firefly spray, and behind
Me the heather moulded over the young
Hills, mauve; and then I did not think of what
It meant, how the light massed behind my eyes,
How, like the sea that sketched fresh contours on
The sand, these scenes had mapped my mind. And now
As I remember, and war has torn the
Mist from far horizons and overscored
These early maps of peace, I wonder where
The lines intersect on some memory
Not yet lived out, and inadequately
I search between the forms of woods and war
For the bare relations of then and now.

All Suffering Is . . .

All suffering is held within
These branches, and as tenderly
As love, and the power of history
Is the wind that proscribes a tree.

The theme strikes through its sun-nettling
And serrated patterns, and these
Are fluttered shadows of your eyes
Moved in love with the heart's unease;

Or else the wing-fretted shadows
That narrow down the altitudes
In a pointillism of death
On the unsuspecting multitudes.

O, then is the movement of leaves
Like water, the falling of tears
From your eyes, when love has been caught
Like a bird netted round with fears.

Or here is the sense of birth, where
Birds break through these leaf-fingered calms
And, with poems in their beaks, bring
All suffering within your arms.

ALISON BOODSON

Love Poem

The stranger who inhabits you
    with fire and faithlessness
is tinder to my angry flint
    and granite to my kiss.

Sometimes your eyes are lakes of love
    lost to the restless tide;
then your hands murmur like young birds
    over my sleeping side.

And sometimes your fingers are hard like wings
    sharp on a bright sky—
and in your eyes I can see nothing
    either of love or pity.

But a cold wind blows over
    our bed by the cold sea
and the stranger who inhabits you
    leans over and kisses me.

DAVID WRIGHT

Landscape of a Midland Spring

I see a rare Spring plug in brush and nook
The early flowers that with fresh looks show,
A season hanging in the woody oaks,
Fair blown from weedy bays and Wales,
Displumager of the glaze-wingy rooks.

As the invention of the sun hangs Spring
Over the poles that scaffold a mountain,
The plan of March squares the varying fields,
And cold geographic winds blow down
On the dogbarking woods, the wedge of Wales.

Over the boundaries they carry
A Sargasso from Equator torn,
The sodden fathoms with a frieze of sedge
Lie shot between me and the sun,
Weighting the area of the fronded woods.

Alcoves of birds in the woods begin
Their escalades in the avenues'
Echo. A conger slinging through trees
Is the accidia that like a worm
Circles their anonymous song and my dog days.

A garland gathers for no poem now.
Crossing the dolmens the white currents freeze
Fine on the yards of apple and flake down
In the Spring-yellow gales;
Volleys of the structured colours freely blow,

The sun illumines brown the fringy ranks,
Paring the features of that Sargasso
Where Avon alters the farewelling woods.
Real on my hand the tendril knocks,
There the swan-towering plumage scores the floods.

WRENNE JARMAN

Bath

Fed by the mothering Mendips, this stone city:
A blackened miniature under bleaker skies
Of white Palladian sires. A latin quality,
An accent never lost, about it lies.

Here lies a royal body, incorrupt.
Through the thick glass of Time, the smile it
wears
Is tranquil as in life: nothing abrupt
Has closed its understanding with the years.

The years go over its features with lovingness.
The Avon swans with love caress the river:
The Abbey Jesus looks down only to bless:
The turret Angels embrace their ladders forever.

Forever, like fond parents trained to note
The least noise in the night, we, listening long
And with a contrite heart, can isolate
Stone's, timber's, iron's, a building's, a city's
song.

The song of this stone city is plain-chant,
Rising and falling in a susurration
Continuous, untiring—and intolerant
Of single hymns as of the generations.

The generations hear from their worn tombs.
Their effigies in the grey flesh of their city
Lie with stiff, folded hands awaiting Doom,
And an appeased Medusa's quickening pity.

BREWSTER GHISELIN

The Dalian Plain

She lies behind hot blinds, on a wide bed,
In shadow not for sleep. All afternoon
The pillow has been wet with sweat of tears.

Now past delirium, empty of her grief,
She sees those signs that watched her agony
Stare at her with the midwife face of truth.

Day is around her like a plain without
An end. Hot, far, the dry cicada rachets.
The full wallpaper rose on rose repeats.

She sees the immense landscape of regret
Enambered in irrefutable light,
Dark on the Dalian plain her long shadow.

JOHN BAYLISS

The Tree

Trust not your lover, lady, for his love
is leafless, brings no shelter to a bride,
no birds sing on his boughs and sunlight leaves
long before sunset though the sky be bright.
He like a winter elm holds treachery,
keep back his touch for passing cloud or darkness,
sways with a swift deceptive gentleness,
but kills the heart with swift uncertainty.

Oh do not therefore trust him, rather rust
your heart in locket or in miniature,
part not with one small strand of that fine hair
but rather let it fall and gather dust.
Your lover stands in darkness like a tree,
and when he loves he moves but to betray.

Lines

This light she shares with children, that the sun
With all its element of lust and power
should settle on her arms and fine thin hair
like yellow pollen from a flower on fire:
and I am like her cold dark guardian
a black tree, bark and shadow ringed with fear,
the sundial's sinister grey finger,
and self-destroying figure of the year.

WREY GARDINER

Here in the Silent Room

FOR SENTA MARNAU

Here in the silent room alone when the bell strikes
I am listening to the dead at midnight
Who are always living,
Living and with us
If we wish
Like the sea
And the silently drifting ship.

We go too often from one thing to another
Hurriedly, and do not observe
The interrogating silence in between,
The necessity of solitude, the love
Of the perfect circle,
Of the purity of truth
In the bitter weather.

For behind the bird note, the colour
Of autumn presaging the winter of our death
The solitary beauty of midnight with Bach
Is the desire of our union with one
Who is the reflection of our wish,
The ship drifting at midnight
Into the timeless dream.

RUTHVEN TODD

Christopher Smart

'A drunken little crazy dog,' some said
Who watched him as he knelt and prayed,
Or saw his collar's grime-smeared edge:
He called to them to join his prayer
Who crept along the pavement's ledge
With lips set sideways in a sneer;
His importunities they'd brush aside,
Remarking that Bedlam's gates were wide.

Sometimes he'd think the world well lost,
The rock-wrapped toad would have its day.
His troubled brain ran down creation's chart,
Inviting the whole world to come to pray,
And he in sorrow, of broken mind and heart,
Foresaw how he himself was ultimately blessed.

PAUL POTTS

Inside the last line is where you'll find the title

I took my heart and walked towards an altar
On which a God is worshipped who has not before
Been asked to grant a favour to the poor.
I take this poem and run towards the future.

No quill this tongue, in some giant eagle's hurrying wing
The saddle-throne on which a happy nightingale
Rides out a mile or two to near the listening sun,
But through the plodding of a flower-drunk bee
This wood is turned to wax, this to a wick that burns

A candle, that throughout the sadness of these hours will ask
The poor to kill, O not the rich, that's easy
But on this altar to which I struggled with my heart
I want to see the poor kill poverty.

ERNST SIGLER

Variations on Sidney Keyes

Shifting his outsize figures through
an airless maze where at each corner
crouched the knowing tiger, for him
base logic he had flicked into
knight and pawn and castle
gloated with the beast's absolute
power victorious.

Emptiness
was desire for the frigid bedfellow;
dreams called for the accurate
draft of gridlines, within each square
prospering secure the word on the tip of the brain.
But now he pursued weak lines on the leaf
outward, outward to unresolved beginnings:
who could be told that beyond the narrow vein
vast countries rich in vegetation
stretched unattended by canals?

No longer aware of the beast, he stood
trembling on the frontier, his feet
refreshed by the last well, at his back the exact
geometry of future. And went
to patrol the uncharted orchard, certain of nothing
except that he would not return.

Such is the terror hardens you at night
when at the window gape the stony faces,
the wounded eyeball turns to dreams for light:
such is the terror hardens you at night,
to threaten giants rocking in their height
and have you teach the tiger jingling paces:
such is the terror hardens you. At night
when at the window gape the stony faces.

Consider the word to atone for the image's
haloed excess. You have no other knowledge.

Move. Two forward, one to the right. Move.
The pace is set. Down and wait, wait

a long time: you are the tip of the arrow,
you are the first they will see or hear,
the least noise. Your ear to the ground now.

The image is tall, from its core the veins
run outward, outward: the crux of living.

Behind you, left and right, five yards
clear distance between them: again, move,
move and they will follow through the high grass.
Now can you see? Then look behind you,
look how one by one they fall away.

The crux of living, shapeless root, fantastic shadow,
the image vulgar like the summer dream.

No need to look when you rush the bridge:
no friend to follow you, no one has seen
the river or knows of the bridge.
The beast slinking back at your approach,
the house—last vein: you stare at the light within.

Consider the image you moved through its proper squares:
the word, the crux of living is, you never die.

Who could be told, the lover at the gate
had knocked to drain his blood, the heavy burden
borne till the bridge was crossed: to share his plight
who could be told? The lover at the gate
faltered and fell and heard the clowns relate
his gentle song to blithe ears they had bidden.
Who could be told? The lover at the gate
had knocked to drain his blood, the heavy burden.

He stumbled over the cruel rope drawn tight across his distance,
and hands that were evil to see twisted ribs and elbows and skull until
O they had waylaid all the strings of his ache for beast and virgin
to lampoon with tormenting eyes.

Who could behold as he did the crude vanity of his veins
by the calm incision shattered, and resign without wrath the pale
expanse of dusk settling on the numbered, wearisome day?
Mockery had accosted his eyes

and in the unsullied orchard that had been promised to him
opalescent haters had crouched in the thickets, and the arrows
to pierce him were aimed in every tree gloating tall and firm
over the horror that ended his eyes.

In the white room a candle for his eyes
is all their knowledge of the promised season,
of summer coming with its blanching face
in the white room. A candle for his eyes,
their almost night dreading the plotted course
of needle, cumbersome, set on his person
in the white room: a candle for his eyes
is all their knowledge of the promised season.

KENNETH PATCHEN

For the Mother of My Mother's Mother

Wind. Flower. Pretty Village.
1847

This is the autumn, Jenny.
Leaves scratch
The lowest star.
Green are the leaves, Jenny.

Pleasure in a warm young body . . .

Dogs snap
At the sullen moon.
Cruel are the dogs, Jenny
They do their crazysad love
Over your sleeping face.

Snow. Rain. A bad world.
Jenny, my darling Jenny . . .
Black are the leaves that fall
On your grave.

COLEMAN ROSENBERGER *

The Goats of Juan Fernandez

The fern grows in the volcanic dust, the green
Frond, surviving a thousand spores, turning
From the water to this island in the water,
The fossil's heir, extending its stipe and blade;

The sea elephants swim, sporting and mating
Keeping the cunning contours for survival;
And the fur seals, gregarious in the rookeries,
Gathering the harems, mating and surviving;

Concealed by its colour and the foliage is
The green bird guarding the fertilized egg,
Its mate, above, poised over the pinnacles,
Is supported by what generations of wings?

Here Juan Fernandez, the Devil's sailor,
Sea sorcerer, rider of the trade winds,
Piloted goats to anchorage on the island.
The goats survived.

* Coleman Rosenberger, a young American poet, has published poems in most of the 'little' and literary magazines in the United States, and has contributed articles and reviews to *The Nation*, *The New Republic*, *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, etc. His work has appeared in no English magazine.

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE

Solitude

By a sandy heath this old shore-land sinks to the sea;
Sown against sand, these old meadows march to the waves,
But rock, in its wrestle with fern, has brought them to halt.

These sombre shapes exalt the solitude;
Little by little we find ourselves alone; we are two
lost footprints, only you and I.
A trio of sea-mews pass in triangular flight,
Filled with the greed of shipwreck or of waves.
Nothing but cinderous stone, nothing but sea-shells.
Only the sandy heath-land goldenly flowering.

(Translated by Derek Stanford)

NICHOLAS MOORE

A Dialogue, of the Birds appearing as Green

A. To your eye, if you are successful in your overtures,
Will come always the responding blindness, the curl
Of vision which deceives. It is not yours
Rather than another's. It is simply that there is a girl . . .

B. 'There is a girl who walks the sudden night
As in a beauty of delight, devoured
By solemn hours, her eyes like irises alight
With blues and purples, and the shadows carved

About her in responding attitudes'
A. The image
Is not of beauty. You quote a poetry
As if moved by some aphrodisiac rage,
And every word you speak becomes a lie.

B. It is not that I am moved by the evening only,
The gentle lights, the hint of mystery
And peace. I quote to you a native poetry
Which rises from my soul, if you can see . . .

A. A soul in anything? There may be something
In the purity of emotion which one might call
A soul. But is it this that makes you sing
So lyrically? The simple Freudian doll

Could do as much. I must distrust my senses
When, speaking of a girl, I raise these flights
Of poetry in you. Nothing convinces
In what you seem to say.
B. These are the nights . . .

A. These are the nights when a certain beauty walks
With deceptive tread. Its feet leave on the dew-
washed lawns no mark of man or animal,
But only this fancy in your mind: and you

Sing gaily on of impossibilities.
B. There is a tragic echo in your talk
Of other times. I seem to see the eyes
Of a hero through your eyes, and they are bleak

With long agues. A hollowness of despair
Rings in your voice, and seems to give the lie
To every meaning. How breathless seems the air!
How green and bright the dark-leaved trees to-night!

A. It is you who are romancing. Always you see
Beyond the appearance the possibility
Which is only possible to you. You dream.
What you imagine has no meaning to me.

It only has a meaning in itself:
It is empty of relevance. To our discourse
It adds nothing, nor takes away. You spell
Mere words out on your tongue, as though you forced

Yourself to speak beyond appearances
Merely for the pleasure of it.
B. But is not pleasure
To be sought within appearances?
A. The leaves
Of the talking trees deceive you. It is ugly weather.

At nights the cats howl and in the hollow pines
The voices of owls carry an anguish of their own.
But we are beyond superstition. This is a new time,
And the causes of the unfamiliar are soon known.

B. And yet your voice is as unfamiliar to me
As any imaginary ghost, this hard, clipped speech,
This cold illogic of the mind. You seem
Yourself ghostly, in a land beyond the reach

Of warm humanity.
A. You are mad! You are mad!
You are the deceived poet, the charlatan necromancer
Raising ghosts from the dead. If only I had
A gun to shoot you, to show you the real answer

To your deliberations. There is no
Point in showing mercy to your kind, incorrigible
In your anger, in your imagined wisdom. So
It would be but kindness to ease you of this terrible

Life, to draw the last knife across your throat
It is true that this girl seems pure and only for you,
But you will see that she prefers me to the poet!
Speak to her as she approaches, and see what she says to you.

C. I am lonely. I am looking for something to complement
The natural sweetness of the air. I am waiting
For something secret, and something strong. I am lent
A beauty from the night.
A. A time for lovers' meeting.

And I am your man.
C. You stand there like a god.
Ready to direct the circling heavens themselves.
A. I am a man. And you are my heaven.
C. How odd?
He ignores my words; they are left to answer themselves.

A. I am a man. Come to me, my dear, my darling.
You are beautiful. I know what a woman needs—
You are the loveliest thing on earth.
C. How charming
Are his compliments! But who is that standing in the shade?

B. The violet shadows are carved about her face
In responding attitudes. Now she looks at me.
See, her eyes strain in the dark! She lacks peace,
Troubled to find no response to her words.
A. I see

You are shy. There is no need to be afraid
I will show you what to do. Come, kiss me, darling!
B. He is taking her in his arms. Her doubt has fled.
Now she is all ready to be swallowed by his devouring

Lust.

C. Again, again!

A. You are wonderful!

B. She is trembling with delight. She enjoys
His attentions as though he were some god. But we will
See. He is not a god.

C. Darling, what was that noise?

A. Nothing. Come on.

C. I thought I heard a voice
Speaking in the night: it was a beautiful voice.
Isn't the night beautiful, dear, and the waving trees
In this big wind? I am happy. There is no choice

But to be happy with your arms about me?

A. Darling.

B. She feels a certain inadequacy
In the feelings with which he greets her. But, not daring
To admit this, she seeks reassurance. See

How she clings to him, and how he seems
In his embrace almost to be pushing her away!
But now they are saying good-bye. Her dream
Is, for the moment, over. Another day

Perhaps they will resume their intimacy.
I must go back and speak to my friend again.
Hello, old man. Well, how did you get on?
A. Well, how do you think? You know what I am, old man!

B. Notice his conceit!—I am glad you were so successful!
A. The green-eyed monster? As we were saying before
This little angel approached, the Freudian doll
Could do as much. There is very little more

To be said. The illustration should satisfy
You, though you be the hardiest of critics.

B. But

You do not seem to value her as I
Would do, or even take her at her own value. The hot

Night, and the thunder in the air, the peculiar
Light—these seem to have influenced her to be
Less than she seems.
A. Yet I have been all to her,
And had all of her. There is nothing left for you,

However hard you imagine it. I have been
Her dream come true.
B. Yes, I know. But she hasn't seen
Yet what this will lead to. She will in time.
She will see you are a coward.
A. Madman!
B. How green

The night is! Have you noticed a peculiar fragrance
In the air, as though of a beauty melting
Into scent. Ah! it is this that I have awaited. Romance
Which means so much to her! How your halting

Tongue betrays you!
A. Poet! Madman! Fool!
B. I hear you, and I wonder. Why do not strong
Words fall from your lips? Why does the beautiful
Leave you impotent in speech, and even in ang-

-er your tongue find you no words to satisfy?
I am still convinced of my green birds, of my absurd
Imaginations. They at least do not lie
As terribly as you. For to me the word

Is a symbol, while to you it is seeming truth,
And all your seeming truths devolve in lies.
If I am unable to obtain my truth,
It is still a truth. That the brazen lie enjoys

Such an exalted altitude in our Time
Is not my responsibility.
A. You poor weak fool.
How I despise you, and your worthless rhymes!
Why, you don't even know what is beautiful!

B. And yet I think I know why you are troubled
Despite your appearance of calm. There is a girl
'Who walks the sudden night'; at her look men have trembled;
And I alone know why she is beautiful.

POEMS OF *THEIR* TIME

One regrets, of course, every page in an Everyman volume not of one's own choice. The emptiest shelf in any bookshop is the Everyman shelf, replete once with a fair proportion of the 950 volumes, now confined to Hooker, Morris, Austin Dobson, and (if we're particularly lucky) Ruskin or Carlyle. What a stampede there will be for the well-known and the lesser-known classics when those gaps begin to fill up! I can think of at least fifty Everyman volumes I should like to buy as a start now the war's over. There are the gaps in one's shelves where friends have borrowed. . . . But signs of returning classics are not many; instead—No. 981 in the series—we are offered a contemporary anthology, *Poems of Our Time* 1900–1942,* which seems to me strangely out of place in this collection.

For it's neither this nor that. It can't itself claim to be a classic among anthologies, like *Lyrics from Elizabethan Song-books* or Huxley's *Texts and Pretexts;* nor has it a contemporary or formative value, except possibly for the reader who has done little reading of poetry. It is, in fact, an ill-timed affair, leaving off as it does in 1942 with the poetry of the war years undigested and almost untasted. Had the compilers been satisfied to wait till the end of the war they might at least have succeeded in rounding-off their chosen period of the Edwardians, the 1914–18 war, the years *entre deux guerres* and the World War.

Since poetry is for the most part written for and by the young, let us begin with the section covering the war just ended. The book is three years out of date already and tends to lag, critically, far behind the date actually given. Omissions: W. R. Rodgers and Alun Lewis, to my mind among the best half-dozen writers thrown up by those years. No citation from Eliot's *Four Quartets*. Among young writers, Sidney Keyes, Fuller, Gascoyne, Comfort, and Tiller are included. One poem of active service.

Turning back—that is, towards the beginning of the volume—one finds a choice everywhere excessively conservative. Here, according to the space allowed them, are Messrs. Church's and Bozman's favourite poets since the turn of the century: Yeats (17 poems), W. H. Davies (15), De la Mare (14), Edward Thomas (11), Andrew Young (11), Hardy (8), Brooke (7), W. J. Turner (7), Æ, Binyon, Blunden, Church, Day Lewis, Frank Kendon, Kipling, Ernest

**Poems of Our Time*, 1900—1942. Edited by Richard Church and M. M. Bozman. Everyman Library 3s.

Rhys, Edith Sitwell, James Stephens (6 poems each). You may wonder how, in a representative selection, any editor could put more stress on the work of, for example, Richard Church, Frank Kendon and Ernest Rhys than on T. S. Eliot, but that is one of the book's idiosyncrasies. Its editors are apparently unwilling to admit that in the poetry of the last forty years Eliot has had an incomparably greater influence than any other poet. This is concealed from the reader not only by the meagre selection of Eliot's own work, but by the exclusion later on of much that follows from Eliot. Auden, similarly, is cut down to three poems which would give the uninstructed reader little idea of Auden's originality and influence. The tendency all through, and particularly in the later pages, is to keep safe a pre-Eliot tradition. Some of the defenders who turn out at this unexpected call have a surprised moth-eaten look reminding one of the Home Guard:

> '*Before we came the moon-soaked dews were here,*
> *Washing the feet of thrushes while they sang.*
> *No sun was up when this May morning rang*
> *With the first meadow-music of the year.*
> *Those birds who quired their lovely-throated thanks*
> *To see again the world they loved appear,*
> *The cricket-ground, the old elm branching clear,*
> *The daisies on the boundary's unscythed banks,*
> *The green pavilion whose hour draws near,*
> *And (lost ball, six!) the green and brackish mere . . .*'

('Prelude to Cricket,' by Thomas Moult). Surely that old defender might have been left at home? There is a good deal of lush rural colour, some of it from out-of-the-way corners, but surprisingly an absence of Sir John Squire. The further we go back in date the more representative the selection becomes.

Well, this has been a carping review—let me add, before I forget, the names of Betjeman, MacDarimid, and Harold Monro to the omissions—and I have intended it to be, since the editors show a considerable complacency about their choices. And it is not so much that they leave out writers they should have put in (130 poets of various kinds are included) as that the emphasis has been wrongly distributed. Yeats is one of the few who emerge as they should from such an anthology; Binyon, too, has been well served. Lastly, to record a pleasure, I am glad to find here a poem by Geoffrey Scott. He had dropped out of the anthologies, but is, I think, as a minor poet hinting at minor keys, worth remembering.

G. W. STONIER

Personal Landscape (An anthology of exile) (Editions Poetry, London, 6s.); HAROLD MORLAND, *Fables and Satires* (Routledge, 7s. 6d.).

For five years now a wind out of Egypt has been muttering intimations at our English door. Indeed, Terence Tiller in a letter to John Bayliss suggested they might prove of the near-immortal kind. Then, last October in *Horizon*—which deals with writers come of age—Olivia Manning recounted for us, under the title of 'Poets in Exile', how 'Larry Durrell' and his wife in flight from Greece kept their baby daughter Ping Ku alive with tinned milk heated on a primus at the islands they touched in an open boat.

Finally, the tablets have come from Sinai: a selected collection of prose and verse which appeared in the magazine, *Personal Landscape*. The great Cairo myth can take its stand for trial. This it succeeds in doing very well; answering our questions with urbanity and elegance, even if it sometimes fails to convince us with the afflatus of an argument *ad hominem*, or forces us to admit its poetic innocence.

Indeed, many of these poems have the 'occasional' ring about them. Verses by the same author do not hang together in a body; have the appearance of being fragments gathered and polished against impending ruin. This lacking quality, these limitations Robin Fedden has diagnosed in an admirable introduction to this anthology entitled 'An Anatomy of Exile'. The chief danger to the expatriate poet, he suggests, is not the isolation from the shores of his mother-culture but the 'stagnation' resulting from it. And much of this verse presented here might be described as the crystals of stagnation; cleverly shaped small-ornament work. There is, for example, a lack of major themes, and when George Seferis, a Greek poet, writes:

> '*I want only to speak simply, to be given the grace,*
> *Because the song has been loaded with so much music little by little it is sinking*
> *And we have decorated our art so much that its face has been eaten away by the gold,*
> *And it is time for us to say our few words because tomorrow the soul will set sail*',

we feel we are back in middle stream again after punting about near the bank amidst a swarm of bumping boats. Then, too, a somewhat weary Alexandrine note—*gaudeamus igitur*, with the gilt off, so to speak—is felt in the admiration of these writers for the Greek poet Cavafy, upon whom Robert Liddell pens a pleasing little essay.

Yet, with these limitations accepted, there is little room for overmuch carping, for *Personal Landscape* certainly contains some of the most accomplished verse being written today. Lawrence Durrell contributes nine poems, developing his sense of fun ('Nonsense is never just nonsense; it is more like good sense with all the logic removed.' 'Shakespeare and Lear are twins who do not dress alike'), and his poetics of heraldry. Terence Tiller gives us '17 propositions', No. '2–21' of which defines the weakness in his eight poems, namely, 'Poetry's reality, then, is the knowledge and calculation of effects'. There are also poems by Bernard Spencer, Keith Douglas, Hugh Gordon Porteus, and others; prose by Lawrence Durrell, Gwyn Williams and H. L. R. Edwards; and translations by Ruth Speirs and Elie Papadimitriou.

> '*Fables insooth are not what they appear;*
> *Our moralists are mice, and such small deer.*
> *We yawn at sermons but we gladly turn*
> *To moral tales and so amused we learn.*'

So wrote the poet versifying Dr. Johnson's regulation-heavy definition of the fable ('. . . a narrative in which beings irrational and somewhat inanimate are, for the purpose of moral instruction, feigned to act and speak with human interest and passion'). This feat in didactic entertainment has been achieved by a few writers in the past: by Marie de France, la Fontaine, John Gay, Lessing, and the Russian Krylov.

Success, however, does not follow upon forcing the time-honoured animals of these tales to jump through the circus-rings of convention to a dreary drum-tattoo of clichés.

The brightest part of *Fables and Satires* are the drawings by Helen Kapp.

DEREK STANFORD

AGNES STANSFIELD, *Hölderlin* (Manchester U.P., 7s. 6d.); RONALD BOTTRALL, *Farewell and Welcome* (Editions PL, 6s.); ed. CARPENTER, LINDSAY, ARUNDEL, *New Lyrical Ballads* (Editions PL, 4s. 6d.); HERBERT CORBY, *Hampdens Going Over* (Editions PL, 4s. 6d.); *Today's New Poets* (Resurgam Press, 4s. 6d.); ERIC PETERS, *The Irreplaceable Melody* (Fortune Press, 6s.).

To the many books on Hölderlin that have lately appeared Agnes Stansfield has now added a biographical essay with her own translations. It is intended for those who 'do not yet know Hölderlin', and read as a primer it will do very nicely. What recommends it is Miss Stansfield's avoidance—except in the fanciful first few pages and certain analytical passages, such as the chapter in which she tells the plot of Hyperion in the manner of a Guide To The Opera—of the trap of romanticizing set to any writer on Hölderlin by his relationship with Susette Gontard. The inclination to consider this love affair the single, simple cause of his madness is so strong that it is surprising his life has never been extravaganzaed in Glorious Technicolour—as was recently done for Chopin and Georges Sand. Throughout her book Miss Stansfield elaborates the idea that the roots of madness in Hölderlin were not Greece and Diotima alone, but rather his fear of being forced to carry out theological duties; his reaction to the behaviour towards him of Schiller who, idolized by Hölderlin, first encouraged him, later requested an Ovid translation and turned it down, and finally almost completely disregarded him; but, most important, the tragic figure of his mother and her powerful influence over his actions: 'I can tell you from the depth of my heart—I feel most strangely how in secret you possess my soul', he wrote to her.

In this on the whole scholarly study of Hölderlin's way to madness, and in the many extracts it gives from his letters, lies the value of the book; its chief demerit, in that only one of the poems, and none of the letters, is given in German, and that therefore those who 'do not yet know Hölderlin' are expected to accept as final Miss Stansfield's rarely inspired and sometimes pedantic translations.

. . . . .

At first reading Ronald Bottrall's poetry seems to offer everything one's overstrained, sated emotions require. The blurb promises 'no concessions to the lazy reader', the tempo of the lines is never childish, the intellectual attitude, even towards the reader, even towards Love, without condescension. Or is it?

'It may come when least asked for,
Be withheld to the most piteous prayers,
Come stealing in the night
Or rushing as an express train
Assaults the eye in the cinema.
But when it comes it cannot be mistaken.'

Any difficulty in following Mr. Bottrall? Granted, the language is simple in this poem (the title poem, described as 'perhaps his most ambitious and successful yet'). The subject is Love, and in the course of the book Love is considered from every possible angle —erotic, architectural, metaphysical, medical. And it seeems to me remarkable that the intellectual poet, grappling with his basic truths, treating of them with fantastic verbosity, finishes, in his great moment of simplicity, on a level no higher than that of the Charing Cross Road lyric writer.

Having thought much about the poet's proper viewpoint, Mr. Bottrall will have decided that the best view may be obtained by standing well away: good. There are indications that he managed to do so physically. But when it comes to realizing his observations on paper (was it not Tambimuttu who said: The moment a man starts to write he ceases to live?) the result is, as in his poem Icarus, one is shown the man who watches Icarus crash and explains, concealing his amusement, the inevitability of the situation to the relatives in order to console them. It is an attitude which causes one to regard him enviously and sometimes resentfully because of its almost smug assurance. At times pleasant conceits such as 'Odour of Sanctity' will be produced by it, at others, ballads out of Auden by Plomer without the wit, such as 'Jack Thompson':

'Jack bore the ersatz hearts away
And singing a Te Deum
He deposited them reverently
In the Imperial War Museum.'

Auden and Empson are the two most obvious influences on Mr. Bottrall; though there is nothing in these poems as immediately attractive as Empson's chorus lines, nor are the intentionally matter-of-fact and ephemeral images as persuasive and stimulating as Auden's. Sometimes it must have been sheer will-power that created them:

'Before, we had too little time to spare
For the things more real than the door knob,

More difficult than a telemark
And less ephemeral than a cruiser touched off by a mine.

Albeit, the views of the intelligent person with

'The ecstasies of someone who had not declared his love
But remained a spectator at the wedding',

are usually more interesting than the tame lover's, so long as the love remains undeclared; and there are poems in this book—the epilogue, 'Eppur si muove', for example—of a quality to lift it above the average of collections available today or for consideration in this review. If the sales call for a second impression, may the dust-jacket please be less hideously coloured, the silly frames round the sub-titles removed, and some of the misprints corrected.

. . . . .

'During the last generation or so, much has been done to bring poetry and life together in ways adequate to the great crisis through which humanity has been passing': thus the editors in their introduction to *New Lyrical Ballads*, an anthology compiled with the purpose of an 'affirmation of a direct and active relation between poetry and life'. One may consider that it would be difficult to produce proof of the existence of such a form of relationship today; but even if one feels that the appreciation of poetry has become inseparable from an overpowering interest in sectarian politics and economics ('life' seems to be regarded as a synonymous term in this volume), it is hard to see how a synthetic and patronizing collection of 'items'—as the work of one contributor is in self-abasement described—can possibly have the desired effect on even the desired audience.

If, as another recent anthology on the same lines leads me to believe, a poem such as Yeats' Easter 1916 is to be considered the ideal of this type of verse, it is hardly possible to ignore the most obvious lesson Yeats teaches his imitators: no matter how deeply concerned with and involved in his subject the poet may be, he must not forego his right to objectivity. He is the recorder, the historian; and let his audience consist of himself alone or of a million individual persons—there being, for his purposes, no such thing as a mob—the biassed feelings of his life must not be allowed to infringe on his poetical detachment. If one is first prepared to believe that all the contributors to this book had made sure that, to paraphrase Rilke, they had to write these verses or die, one reason for its failure is their inability, as poets, to remain detached from themselves as persons apparently satisfied with the most banal

feelings and thoughts. A second reason is that in their attack, as poets, on the emotions of what they are likely to call The Masses, they frequently mistake vulgarity for simplicity.

(1) '*Sparrow eyed the capstan kids,*
Glory, they were lookers!
Till Rose cocked up her legs and showed
No knickers!'

(2) '*Comrades and friends . . .*
Over there in Stalingrad . . .
Flesh and blood . . .
A rock, a solid wall . . .'

In my opinion these two quotations chosen at random, no better or worse than fifty others I could have picked, are as crude as they are naïve—the sort of naïveté which imagines that Shakespeare and Marlow, simply by being spoken of as Will and Kit, are made more comprehensible to the shapeless, faceless audience these ballad-mongers envisage—if such a completely negative audience exists outside their imaginations or the popular Press. Thus this book—excepting only Paul Potts and one or two others who do at least manage to recognize eyes amongst the mob—is like a vacuum fired into space and, in the words of Somerset Maugham, I cannot stomach the heartiness with which it slaps me on the back or the emotion with which it hurls itself on my bosom.

. . . . .

Herbert Corby's book—could I please be enlightened about the meaning of its extraordinary frontispiece?—is one which should be praised if the word-for-word transcription of experiences were all that is required of a poet. But at present anyway, the experiences are too great and too near at hand for Mr. Corby's poetical equipment; and however proper and justifiable the feelings they arouse in him, to have us echo these feelings calls, after years of stories of suffering and heroism and cheapness produced by war, for more than verse reportage and snapshots. He does, indeed, succeed with some of his simple, well-sustained sonnets—such as 'For Air Gunners' and 'Landing Ground'—in what he sets out to do; but he should have been more careful, when selecting for publication, not to include so many watered-down repetitions of ideas which have been better expressed, even by himself, or lines like:

'*Half a hundred times she's bombed the huns,*
fifty times over enemy cities, scorning
the anger and the blizzard of their guns . . .'

and

'pilots talking before they go to bomb
Berlin, or scare the bloodless hearts in Rome . . .'

which make it difficult for one to take him seriously. Or he should have waited for tranquillity.

. . . . . .

The Resurgam anthology contains good poetry by writers who have deservedly established or increased their reputations in the course of the war. But since one has to dig one's way to them through some cloying rubbish—the pieces called 'Letter from an Italian Prisoner', 'Vital Torrent', 'Poem II' and 'Tempted' are prime examples—and it should be noted that many of the good poems are reprints from other collections.

. . . . . .

Finally, *The Irreplaceable Melody.*

' *"Look, a lark," I cried, "down-winging*
From an ecstasy of singing . . .
And to think each shrilling note
Welled from that small-feathered throat!" . . .
"Bet you half a can," says he,
"That's a Spitty, Mark Five B!" '

Such melodious singing is indeed irreplaceable. How foolish of the poet to waste it on the vulgar ear of the public.

ERNST SIGLER

IDENTITY CARD

PAUL POTTS, *Instead of a Sonnet* (Nicholson & Watson, 4s. 6d.)

About Paul Potts, that criminal whose felony is to love everything a bit too much, that lost revolutionary with the sentiments of an Irish tenor, I would like to say that in my opinion it is better to be an extremely corny saint than an extremely good poet. A critic in New York once called my poems the poems of a hoodlum angel, and I would call Paul Potts' poems the poems of an angelic hoodlum. The truth is of course that they are not poems at all, but liturgical humanitarism which his lack of technique has only half baked. When they come to name the hierarchy of humanitarian martyrs this colonial with the childish name, like Abhou Ben Adam, will be there.

GEORGE BARKER

EDWIN HONIG, *Garcia Lorca* (PL, 7s. 6d.).

The quantity of literature concerning such an internationally important poet as Garcia Lorca is so scanty that we must welcome so careful and scholarly a treatise as that of Mr. Edwin Honig. Mr. Honig makes a painstaking study of the structure of Lorca's works, and he devotes much space to describing the plays, individually Lorca's most impressive productions, which unfortunately have not yet been made available to English readers whose command of Spanish does not enable them to read the editions of his so-called complete works which are occasionally found in English bookshops.

But, for the very reason that we have so long awaited a major study of Lorca, Mr. Honig's book is by no means completely satisfying. As an academic study of Lorca's writings it is reasonably good, but Mr. Honig becomes so much concerned with the detailed description of these works that he tends to ignore, or at least to devote too little space to the discussion of what we might call—without exaggeration—the universal significance of Lorca's work in the modern world.

It would be difficult to think of a man whose life and death were more symptomatic of the travails of the individual in modern human society. The struggles and tragedies of Spain have often been shown to contain a prophetic epitome of the fate that has since fallen upon the whole of the western world, and it is certain that in Spain the social conflicts of European humanity were shown in startling clarity by that triangle of extremes marked out by Carlism, Communism and Anarchism. So, in Lorca, who was nothing if he were not a Spaniard, we can perceive a universal symptom of that great conflict upon which western man has now entered, the conflict between the individual and the collective, between the concrete living relationship of free men and the abstract and fictitious uniformity demanded by the organized State.

Lorca was passionately an individual, a man free from the collective prejudices of political life, and it was literally for this crime of being spiritually and mentally free that he met his death. The generals and politicians of the Falangist movement realized that a sincere and independent poet was more dangerous to them than a hundred professional revolutionaries. For this reason Lorca was among the first of their victims, and in his death anticipated the uncomfortable fate of the artist in the authoritarian world, which is either to conform and endure a voluntary spiritual destruction, or to resist and be subjected to the open or veiled persecution of a society of mental slaves.

But Lorca was not significant only in his sensational death or the events that preceded it. He is of peculiar importance in modern European poetry because he was the only poet of any magnitude who wrote what could genuinely be called poetry of the people. We have had in our day many 'proletarian poets', 'poets of the people', etc., pathetic figures who have shouted into the world some crude bombast which has had no real relation to the life or spirit of the people, has made no appeal to any beyond a tiny circle of political doctrinaires, and has shown no poetic value whatsoever. Lorca differed from these sub-poets, in that his poetry was rooted deeply in the life and thoughts of the Spanish peasantry and urban underdogs, in that much of his work was appreciated by these people themselves, and in that his poetry was perhaps, in so far as one can validly make such dangerous interlingual comparisons, the most complete poetry that was being written in Europe of his time. But Lorca was in a peculiarly fortunate position, because he was able, unlike poets of other European countries, to immerse himself in the poetry of a living folk culture. In every other country in Europe, folk poetry and folk legend have lived on into the present century more as social curiosities, like Red Indians preserved in reservations, than as phenomena which have a continuous and organic connection with the life of the people. They may survive, but they have ceased to grow. In Spain, on the other hand, the folk culture of the peasants and the folk song and poetry, particularly the gypsy *cante jondo*, still grow and blossom as changing products of social life.

It was by tapping these great sources of poetic material that Lorca contrived to write literature that was at the same time individually valid and linked with the mental life of the people. Yet it is necessary to be cautious in such statements—for Lorca was no mere imitator of folk forms. He took his material from the song and the emotional life of the people, but he subjected it to his own individual imagination and to the technical ability of a poet who had also kept a close contact with the literary movements of his time, so that we find in Lorca a universality—not unlike that of Shakespeare—which took living inspiration from all parts of the world, from America, from the suffering Negro, from international surrealism, while remaining all the time closely linked to the characteristically tragic life and independent outlook of the Spanish peasants.

Lorca was an Andalusian, and in Andalusia the peasants were inspired by a form of anarchism that was expressed in a religious devotion to the ideal of personal freedom. Not even in Catalonia

did this libertarian doctrine have so great a hold over the minds of the simple people. And Lorca, though he never gave himself the label of a group or a movement, was as conscious of the need for freedom as the most extreme member of the F.A.I. To him the independence of the free human mind was all important and, like the anarchist, he realized that this independence can grow only from an organic folk unity, as opposed to the external unity of political forms.

It was for this reason that Lorca tended to identify himself with those sections of the population, Gypsies and Negroes, who are most sharply in opposition to the governing structure of society. Not only did he accept the gypsy song and the gypsy form of expression, and integrate them into his poetry. He also accepted the gypsy's hatred of the force of organized society, as shown in his famous poem against the Spanish Civil Guard.

It is an elaboration of this side of Lorca's thought that we miss in Mr. Honig's study, which at best remains an exercise in literary research. But, as I have already said, within these limitations this is an interesting and useful book. It is well documented with examples of Lorca's verse, including extracts from the plays, much of which is unknown to most English readers, and Mr. Honig's translations are at least accurate, even if they give no better idea of the real value of Lorca's poetry than any of the previous translations.

To mention one example, let us take that fragment from Lorca's 'Ode to Walt Whitman', which runs:

> '*Agonia, agonia, sueño, fermento y sueño.*
> *Este es el mundo, amigo, agonia, agonia.*
> *Los muertos se descomponen bajo el reloj de las ciudades,*
> *la guerra pasa llorando con un millión de ratas grises,*
> *los ricos dan a sus queridas*
> *pequeños moribundos iluminados*
> *y la vida no es noble, ni buena, ni sagrada.*'

This moving passage Mr. Honig translates into:

> '*Agony, agony, dream, ferment and dream.*
> *This is the world, my friend. agony, agony.*
> *The dead are rotting under the city clocks.*
> *War goes by weeping with a million grey rats;*
> *rich men give their mistresses*
> *tiny dying illuminati,*
> *and life is not noble, or good, or sacred.*'